Professionalism

In order to succeed in college and a career, you will need at least these 16 skills:²

- **★ Appearance.** You dress according to the norms of the workplace and understand that appropriate appearance impacts cultural fit at work.
- **★ Timeliness.** You arrive on time and are rarely absent without cause. You understand that punctuality affects how people perceive you.
- ★ Oratory / Speaking. You use appropriate language, volume, clarity, and tone based on the norms of the workplace. You use a friendly tone and smile when speaking with others.
- **★ Attitude.** You are optimistic and are a positive influence in groups.
- ★ Accountability / Integrity. You take responsibility for your actions and have high expectations for the quality of your work.
- ★ **Self-Control.** You can resolve difficult situations calmly and without getting defensive.
- ★ Ambition / Initiative. You set and achieve goals. You are self-motivated and look for work to do when your assigned tasks are completed.
- **★ Supervision.** You stay on task with little supervision.
- ★ Procedure / Rule Following. You follow all rules and procedures. You ask for clarification when directions are unclear. You even help suggest new or better procedures when needed.
- ★ Problem-Solving Approach. You identify problems, understand them, develop a plan to solve them, implement the plan, and then evaluate the results.
- ★ Information Management. You can find and analyze information to solve a problem. You can understand information from charts and graphs and can recognize which information is most important to a situation. You seek opportunities to learn new information.
- ★ Verbal Communication. You use words to present your ideas in a clear and logical manner. You can engage others in brainstorming and conflict resolution. You do not gossip.
- ★ Active Listening. You understand what you hear and ask clarifying questions when you do not. You maintain eye contact and you nod or use verifying statements to show you are listening.
- **★ Feedback.** You actively seek feedback and respond positively to constructive criticism.
- **★ Teamwork.** You work well with others to accomplish shared goals. You share responsibility. You respect and value other team members' input. You are willing to compromise to achieve team success.
- ★ Computer Literacy. You can operate a computer, connect to the internet, communicate via email, and use software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and Powerpoint.

² Chicago Public Schools / Chicago Workforce Investment Council's Employability Assessment



Communication at Work

The way you talk to your friends is different from the way you speak to coworkers, customers, and others in the workplace. The following suggestions can be used in any professional situation.

Words & Phrases					
	Instead of this	Try this			
Where are the diapers and baby blankets? They seem to have moved.	I have no idea.	That's a good question. Let me check and find out.			
I can't get the vending machine to work.	That's not my problem.	I understand how upset you are.			
I need to return this item but I lost the receipt.	We can't do that.	That's a tough one. Let me see what I can do.			
The salad bar is out of lettuce.	Yeah, yeah, I'll get to it.	I'll take care of that for you personally.			
I wanted you to know that I'm returning the bathroom key.	Thanks.	Thank you. Have a great day.			



Actions or Gestures			
Don't	Do		
Crossed Arms	Smiling		
Deep sighing	Making eye contact		
Pursed lips	Gentle nodding		
Eye rolling	Leaning forward		
Looking around the room	Making "listening noises" such as "Mmhm"		
Clenched fists	Open, relaxed posture		

On the Phone				
Instead of this	Try this			
Who's calling?	May I please ask who's calling?			
What's your name again?	Could you please spell your name?			
What's your number?	May I please have your phone number?			
He'll be back later.	He will return to the office around five.			
Hang on a second.	It may take a few minutes to do that. Would you like to hold while I check, or would you like me to call you back?			



Professionalism Do's and Don'ts

Do ...

- **Be dependable.** Be at work every day and on time.
- Cooperate with your supervisor and coworkers.
- Be organized and keep your work area clean and free of clutter.
- Ask questions when you need more information.
- Be honest. Don't lie or hide the truth.
- Plan ahead and let your supervisor know if you will be absent.
- Take responsibility. Admit when you've made a mistake.
- Use your time productively. Stay busy. If you don't have anything to do, ask.
- Be open-minded about new people, assignments, and ways to do things.
- Dress appropriately.
- Take pride in your work.
- Return phone calls and emails as soon as possible.
- Listen carefully.
- Show initiative. Learn new skills and take on new tasks.
- Display a positive attitude!

Don't ...

- Gossip about other coworkers or your supervisor.
- Have your family and friends come by to visit you.
- Fight with coworkers.
- Come to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Use the phone or computer for personal business.
- Nap or sleep in the workplace.
- "Borrow" anything from the company.
- Listen to your headphones while at work.
- Be absent without notice. (If you're sick, call your supervisor right away.)
- Take an extended lunch or break without permission.
- Bring your personal problems to work.

The skills and character traits needed to be a valuable employee work in other areas of your life, too.

Some words used to describe GREAT ...

	EMPLOYEES	BASKETBALL PLAYERS	STUDENTS
Work ethic/ character	Great attitude	Strong work ethic	Hard worker
	Dependable	Driven	Responsible
	Trustworthy	Mentally tough	Self-motivated
Problem-solving	Can take direction	Patient	Behaves & follows rules
	Takes initiative		Willing to study independently
Interpersonal	Listens to/learns from feedback	Willing to listen and learn	Learns from feedback
	Team player	Makes his/her team better	Helps other students
	Gets along with others	Generous	Ready to learn
	Good working skills/ smarts	Intelligent	Intelligent

Source: Chicago Public Schools. "Are you employable?" (2012)

Characteristics of a good student http://www-958.ibm.com/software/data/cognos/manyeyes/datasets/characteristics-of-a-good-student/versions/1
Top 5 characteristics of ideal employees http://pattyinglishms.hubpages.com/hub/Top_5_Characteristics

Qualities of a good basketball player http://www.livestrong.com/article/449843-qualities-of-a-good-basketball-player/

What traits describes a good basketball player http://www.livestrong.com/article/469083-what-traits-describe-a-basketball-player/ Characteristics of a good employee http://www.squidoo.com/characteristics-of-a-good-employee